Evaluation of Faculty Committee 2014-2015 Activity Report

March 5, 2015

Committee Members:
J. Neil Lawley, ART (Chair)
Susan Hennessy, EML
Meredith Katchen, EML
Prashant Tarun, CSB
Mohamed Abdel-Raheem, EGT (Fall 2014)

Faculty Senate Liaison:
Justin Kraft, HPER
The following report is submitted on behalf of the MWSU Faculty Senate’s Evaluation of Faculty Committee. This report highlights committee activities related to assigned charges and duties during the academic year 2014 – 2015.

1. Standing Charges

   a. Annually provide information and recommendations regarding interpretation and comparison of current and past student evaluation data to the Faculty Senate and the Promotion and Tenure Committee.

   b. Periodically review and recommend procedures for the evaluation of faculty members by peers, department chairs, and the University administration.

   c. Conduct a continuing study of faculty evaluation at Missouri Western State University.

   d. Provide information regarding interpretation of evaluation data.

2. Senate Directed Charges

   a. Student Evaluations – Investigate feasibility of using a paperless system instead of the current system of using paper copies. (Coordinate with Promotion and Tenure Committee.)

3. Summary of Committee Activities

   The committee met only a few times during the 2014 – 2015 academic year, as data gathering was our main focus. Most of our time was spent communicating with departments and deans in regard to their peer review policies:

   Sep. 17, 2014 Discussion of charges for 2013-2014

   Oct. 1, 2014 Met with Jake Kelly (IMC) to discuss feasibility of paperless evaluation system

   Feb. 25, 2015 Discussed departmental peer review reports and how to best summarize and present data to Faculty Senate


   Activity Related to Standing Charges

   a. The committee wrote two letters (attached), one for chairs and one for deans, that were distributed to respective schools, colleges, and departments requesting a brief statement about the status and contents of their peer review policies.

   b. The committee gathered information from all departments regarding their peer review policies.
c. The committee communicated with IMC regarding online evaluation response rates, contents of online evaluation, and calculation of evaluation averages.

**Activity Related to Senate Directed Charges**

a. Had an email conversation with the liaison and chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee about their desire to have paperless student evaluations.

b. Met with a representative of IMC to discuss the feasibility of paperless student evaluations.

5. **Findings**

a. The committee found that 13 of 17 (76%) departments/school have a peer review policy in place.

b. One concern observed in departmental policies was the weight assigned peer review in promotion and tenure decisions.

1. Only seven (7) departmental policies specified how peer review will be used in promotion and tenure decisions

2. Seven (7) policies did not specifically state or said that it has no weight in promotion and tenure decisions

c. Regarding a paperless system of student evaluations, the committee found that it is possible, but IMC would need a firm commitment before they invest the man hours necessary to accommodate the request. This is due to several technical issues that would need to be resolved. For example, determination of policy in regards how the electronic data is accessed and issues with the way comments are currently reported in the electronic format. In the case of comment reporting, comments are not tagged with the form from which they originated. This then separates the comments from contextual data which should guide the interpretation of the comments. A system for tagging comments to contextual data does not currently exist and IMC employee hours would need to be dedicated to solving this issue.

d. The committee found that last semester (Fall 2014) the response rate for online course student evaluations was 38%.

e. The committee also found that currently, questions 1-8 on online evaluations (the same questions as regular course evaluations) are averaged in with in-person class evaluations. The committee does not believe this was the intent of previous recommendations and also believes this method of calculation tends to diminish instructors’ averages. The potential bias caused by the low response rate should be considered; displeased students are more likely to respond than those that are satisfied.
f. The committee feels that one of the questions on the online evaluation form is more about students’ opinions of online learning, and less about the ability of the instructor. Therefore it is the committee’s opinion that that question should not be averaged in with the other questions.

Question 16 of online evaluation form: “I believe my learning in this online forum equaled or exceeded that of a conventional classroom experience.”

6. Recommendations to Faculty Senate

a. The committee recommends that Faculty Senate continue to work with chairs and deans to ensure that peer review policies are in place and that they meet the guidelines set forth by Faculty Senate.

b. The committee also recommends that Faculty Senate discuss the adoption of a paperless student evaluation system, with the understanding that implementation of such a system will require sufficient lead time for IMC to solve technical issues.

c. The committee recommends that the committee investigate the following for the upcoming year:

1. the intended procedure for averaging online course evaluation data

2. how the committee’s proposed (and approved by Faculty Senate) method of using median alongside mean as descriptive measures of student evaluation scoring is being implemented
To Deans of Schools and Colleges:
Beginning with the 13-14 academic year, MWSU Policy Guide was amended to establish a mechanism for faculty peer review. In fulfilling our annual charges from the faculty senate, the Evaluation of Faculty Committee is conducting a survey as to how each department is already conducting, or proposing to conduct, faculty peer reviews. The Evaluation of Faculty Committee requests your help collecting updates on the mechanisms already put in place, or still being planned, to accomplish faculty peer reviews. It would be a great help if you would distribute the enclosed letters to your department chairs. In addition, because the Policy Guide specifies that deans shall be responsible for approving peer review guidelines proposed by each department, the committee requests a brief status update (simple list form would suffice) indicating how many departments have already submitted a plan and how many plans have already been approved. Please submit this information to the committee at your earliest convenience, preferably by October 31.
Thank you for your assistance in this matter.
Sincerely,

J. Neil Lawley
Assistant Professor of Art
Chair, Evaluation of Faculty Committee

From the Policy Guide:
Departmental Peer Review Documentation
Peer review shall serve as an additional means of evaluating faculty performance in the area of teaching. Although the precise mechanism of peer review is to be specified at the departmental level, the review process shall provide a faculty member with documentation of teaching performance which shall be retained as part of the evaluation file.
Individual departmental review policies must conform to the following standards:
1) They must include peer review during both the probation period (prior to tenure and promotion from assistant to associate professor) and during the promotion period (prior to promotion from associate to full professor). Peer review after promotion to full professor is encouraged (and may be valuable in nomination and application for faculty distinction awards) but not required (at the discretion of the department).
2) At least one peer review shall be completed prior to the mid-tenure review and a minimum of three reviews shall be required during the probation period as defined above.
3) Departmental peer review procedures must provide the faculty member with clear documentation which must be included in the mid-tenure packet and promotion/tenure packets.
4) At least one review during the probationary period must be made by a faculty member other than the chair.
5) Departments should consider appropriate measures for faculty providing teaching in multiple instructional formats.
6) Departmental peer review guidelines must be approved by the Dean of the College or School.
To Department Chairs:
Beginning with the 13-14 academic year, MWSU Policy Guide was amended to establish a mechanism for faculty peer review. In fulfilling our annual charges from the faculty senate, the Evaluation of Faculty committee is conducting a survey as to how each department is already conducting, or proposing to conduct, faculty peer reviews. Therefore, the committee requests that each department forward a copy of its faculty peer review policy to the committee at your earliest convenience, preferably by October 31. If no policy is in place, please briefly describe the department’s current plans for putting a policy in place.
Thank you for your assistance in this matter.
Sincerely,

J. Neil Lawley
Assistant Professor of Art
Chair, Evaluation of Faculty Committee

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